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DATE: July 12, 2007

TO: Michael Hartman, Deputy Commissioner
Beth Tanzman, Futures
Frank Reed, Director Adult Mental Health

FROM: Brian Smith, DMH Housing Coordinator

RE: Allocation and Eligible Uses of the VSH Futures Recovery Housing Funds

The process of securing input from the field regarding the distribution and eligible uses of the VSH Recovery Housing Fund included a review of recommendations made from the VSH Futures Housing Development Work Group, and the final recommendations made to the VSH Futures Advisory Committee,

In addition meetings were held with stakeholders, a survey of the field was taken, and there was follow up meeting with the VSH Futures Housing Development Work Group on June 18, 2007.

Existing housing resources available to mental health consumers, the capacity of these programs to meet demand, and the most cost effective ways to improve the availability of housing were considered. Finally, the flexibility of housing supports for those at risk of hospitalization and individuals needing resources to return to the community from VSH was a priority in all conversations.

Contributing members of the Community:

- Futures Advisory Committee Members
- Futures Housing Workgroup Members
- Vermont State Hospital Staff
- CRT Directors
- HCF Program Managers
- Residential Housing Managers
- NAMI
- VAMH
- VPS

Findings on Distribution of Funds:

- Systems equity was seen as a value by all stakeholders. The allocation of the Housing Recovery Fund was seen as an opportunity to adjust earlier housing fund distribution methods.

- Hospital Utilization Rates were valued as an indicator of community based need. Stakeholders saw this in the FY07 Housing Contingency Fund increase and felt this was an example of a fair method of distribution
- A Review of statewide Fair Market Rents (see below) was informative

AREA	1988 FMR	2007 FMR	% INCREASE
Addison County	\$394	\$621	57.61%
Bennington County	\$405	\$620	53.09%
Caledonia County	\$335	\$487	45.37%
Essex County	\$335	\$542	61.79%
Franklin County (non-metro portion)	\$375	\$783	108.80%
Grand Isle County(non-metro portion)	\$335	\$783	133.73%
Lamoille County	\$406	\$588	44.83%
Orange County	\$401	\$588	46.63%
Orleans County	\$335	\$485	44.78%
Rutland County	\$436	\$585	34.17%
Washington County	\$405	\$574	41.73%
Windham County	\$422	\$607	43.84%
Windsor County	\$431	\$614	42.46%
Burlington-S Burlington MSA	\$493	\$783	58.82%

Distribution method:

- Fifty percent 50% of the total allocation of 460,500.00 will be divided equally among the ten designated community mental health centers. The remainder will divided among the centers be based upon hospital utilization rates for FY 07.

Findings on Use of Funds:

- Rental Assistance was seen as the most viable method of maximizing the Recovery Housing Fund for those waiting to leave VSH or as a community support to prevent re hospitalizations.
- Special emphasis was made regarding the need to serve individuals with histories of violence, corrections, or sexual abuse in the community. The need for alternatives was voiced by most of the groups represented.
- Flexibility within parameters was seen as essential for the overall success of the Housing Recovery Program.
- Use of Peer Support Workers as temporary or ongoing supports to avoid the loss of housing or to prevent the need for hospitalizations was a benefit that community members considered valuable.

Eligible Uses of the Recovery Housing Fund (*adapted to recommendations and upgraded for 07 costs*):

- A. Apartment set-up costs
 - Security and utility deposits and furnishings usually not to exceed (\$1,250) amend to \$2,000
- B. Partial rent payment
 - When a two or three bedroom apartment shared by a CRT client temporarily has fewer than the full complement of tenants and the CRT client will be remaining in the housing unit
- C. Ongoing partial rent payment (RA) while a person being discharged from VSH or CRT client is on a Section 8 subsidy waiting list (fund beneficiary must be a section 8 applicant or on an affordable housing development waiting list in good standing during the RA period)
 - The fund beneficiary pays up to a maximum of 50% of her income for housing and the Recovery Housing Fund pays the remainder to the landlord
- D. Partial or full rent payment
 - To hold a fund beneficiary's apartment for up to 90 days during a hospitalization or residing in crisis housing if without this fund the recipient would lose her/his housing
- E. Flexible and one-time-only housing supports other than those listed above, Division of Mental Health staff must be contacted for prior approval for supports exceeding 1,800.00 per instance.

Additional noteworthy considerations:

The effort to create and maintain housing options with a capital development fund that is dedicated to supporting VSH patients in the community should be continued.

